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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, August 9, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CHEESE." Facts from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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Another Monday, homemakers, and that means another report from our correspondent with the Food and Drug Administration. She writes:

"At long last -- to use a phrase that will go down in history -- at long last I'm able to send you the cheese report you asked for. Yes, I agree with you that cheese is just as indispensable a food in the summer time as canned salmon, tuna fish, sardines, shrimp -- and the other fish I've been reporting on lately.

"Now, as I have previously explained, there are four or five hundred different kinds of cheese, all told. Some time I hope to get around to sampling every kind -- but as you can see, that will take considerably more than a year, even if I sample one kind of cheese every day, including Sundays.

"So, until I can take time off to do my cheese sampling, I'm going to limit the cheese varieties to eighteen. Anyway, my friends in the Food and Drug Administration tell me there are only about eighteen distinct varieties. These eighteen varieties differ in flavor and texture, according to the way the cheese is made, and to the 'molds' or other organisms used to 'ripen' the cheese.

"In America, nowadays, we make much more cheese than we import. Our principal American cheese is really the English style cheddar, which got its name from the village of Cheddar in Somersetshire, England, where it was made long ago."

Still quoting today's report:

"Cheddar cheese is made from sweet milk, usually whole milk. If skimmed or partly skimmed milk is used, the cheese must be so labeled. Cheddar usually comes from the factory in round flat shapes -- 'Daisies,' which are 13 inches in diameter and weigh 20 pounds; 'Young Americas,' 8 inches in diameter and weighing 8 to 12 pounds; 'Long Horn,' 5 inches in diameter and weighing 12 pounds; and 'Squares,' which are usually 3 or 4 inches thick and weigh 10 pounds. From these the grocer slices off the pound, half pound, or quarter his customers order. Cheddar cheese is also sold in cans -- 12-ounce and 5-pound cans. The green cheese is packed in the can to ripen normally, without rind or waste.

"Another popular whole milk cheese is Limburger, originally made in Belgium, now manufactured extensively in the United States. The curd is ripened in a damp atmosphere by special fermentation. In the dry substance, Limburger contains not less than 50 percent of milk fat, and is usually uncolored. The characteristic strong odor results from forced fermentation, and development of volatile fatty acids. Limburger cheese is generally sold in bricks of one or two pounds,

wrapped in paper and tinfoil.

"As soon as you open the tinfoil," says our correspondent, "you are greeted by the unforgettable odor of Limburger cheese. If you're interested, I can tell you how the odor is developed. Limburger is cured in small blocks of about two pounds, on damp shelves, in damp cellars. The surface of the cheese is kept moist, and every day, for about two weeks, the cheese-makers rub or massage the Limburger. By the end of the two weeks, this daily massage has helped develop some of the characteristic odor. The rest develops after the cheese has been wrapped in tinfoil.

"Another whole-milk cheese we Americans are very fond of is Roquefort. The French Roquefort is made from sheep's milk, and ripened in the damp limestone caverns of Southern France. You can recognize the fully-ripened Roquefort by its mottled or marbled appearance. The curd is inoculated by sprinkling with bread crumbs on which a special mold has been developed. The cheeses permit the mold to grow. The outside of the cheese is salted, scraped, and brushed at intervals to retard development of the mold on the outside. Curing takes from one to five months.

"I have described three whole-milk cheeses," says our correspondent, "Cheddar, Limburger, and Roquefort. Still other popular whole-milk cheeses are Pineapple cheese, formed into a shape resembling a pineapple; Brick cheese; Stilton, which contains the same mold as Roquefort; Gouda, with the saffron-colored rind; Neufchatel; Cream cheese; and Gorgonzola, which, like Stilton, contains the same mold as Roquefort.

"Popular cheese made of whole milk or partly skimmed milk include Edan, Camembert, Brie, Parmesan, and Swiss cheese. A great deal of Swiss cheese is made in this country, especially in Ohio and Southern Wisconsin.

"I would tell you much more about all the cheeses I've mentioned," continues our correspondent, "and I could mention a good many more, if you had nothing to do but listen to the fascinating story of cheese. But every report must come to an end, and in concluding this one I want to remind consumers of these facts:

"First, when buying cheese, if you are looking for the imported product, remember that the original package must carry the name of the country from which it came.

"Second, the labels on cheese manufactured in other countries, but repacked for sale in the United States, usually state the name of the cheese, and in addition, carry the word 'Imported.'

"Third, practically all American-made European varieties of cheese bear qualifying words such as 'American' or 'Domestic', and usually the name of the State in which the cheese was made.

"And lastly, remember that a cheese customarily made from whole milk -- a Cheddar, for example -- will be plainly labeled 'Made from Partly Skimmed Milk,' or 'Skimmed Milk,' if such is a fact."

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